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Message Text

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62
ORIGIN AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 OES-06 DODE-00 PM-04

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R 031625Z APR 76
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE
INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 081103

GENEVA FOR CARTWRIGHT

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, MILI, MA, UR,SO

SUBJECT: US WEATHER BALLOON AND SOVIET FACILITIES BERBERA

REF: TANANARIVE 0462 (NOTAL)

1. DEPT HAS OBTAINED FOLLOWING INFO FROM NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION (NOAA) WHICH MIGHT BE USEFUL TO EMBASSY IN DISCUSSING WEATHER BALLOON INCIDENT WITH GDRM OFFICIALS OR IN RESPONDING TO ANY QUESTIONS BY LOCAL PRESS:

(A) US HAS SUPPLIED UNDER THE WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANI-
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ZATION'S (WMO)'S VOLUNTARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (VAP) AS

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A US CONTRIBUTION, RADIOSONDE EXPENDABLES TO THE FOLLOWING COUNTRIES IN THE GENERAL AREA: SENEGAL, SUDAN, MALI AND GHANA. TOTAL EQUIPMENT USED IN MAKING AN UPPER WIND SOUNDING MAY INCLUDE A BALLOON, PAPER PARACHUTE, FOIL TARGET FOR TRACKING PURPOSES AND A RADIOSONDE

(SCIENTIFIC METEOROLOGICAL EQUIPMENT PLUS A RADIO TRANS-MITTER) ATTACHED. NOT ALL OF ITEMS LISTED WERE SUPPLIED TO ALL OF COUNTRIES NAMED BUT BALLOONS WERE INCLUDED IN EACH INSTANCE. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT EQUIPMENT DISPLAYED BY PRESIDENT IS SOME OF THAT LISTED ABOVE. EQUIPMENT IS COMPLETELY HARMLESS AND IS USED FOR SCIENTIFIC EFFORTS UNDER THE WMO'S PROGRAMS IN WHICH MADAGASCAR HAS PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE.

(B) IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT THE EQUIPMENT COULD HAVE BEEN PURCHASED DIRECTLY FROM AMERICAN MANUFACTURERS BY ANY NUMBER OF COUNTRIES IN AFRICA. FYI: BALLOON COULD ALSO BE FROM US NAVAL FACILITY AT DIEGO GARCIA, OBVIOUSLY WE WOULD NOT WANT TO PUBLICIZE THIS FACT. END FYI.

2. SUGGEST EMBASSY ATEMPT TO OBTAIN OR GAIN ACCESS TO ALL MATERIAL FOUND, EXAMINE IT THOROUGHLY AND MAKE A LIST OF ALL COMPONENTS, AND, IF THE RADIOSONDE INSTRUMENT IS INCLUDED, OBTAIN THE SERIAL NUMBERS ETC., IN ORDER TO IDENTIFY IF IT IS U.S. EQUIPMENT. BELIEVE ROBERT MCCASLIN, A NOAA RADAR TECHNICIAN ON ASSIGNMENT IN MADAGASCAR WITH THE UNDP/WMO PROJECT "CYCLONE WARNING SYSTEM FOR THE SOUTH WEST INDIAN OCEAN," WOULD BE AVAIL-ABLE AS A SOURCE OF TECHNICAL ADVICE IN IDENTIFYING THE EQUIPMENT. IF MCCASLIN IS NOT AVAILABLE, EMBASSY MIGHT CONSIDER SEEKING TECHNICAL ADVICE FROM MR. E. RANDRIANARISON, CHIEF OF THE MADAGASCAR METEORO-LOGICAL SERVICE IN TANANARIVE.

3. INDIAN OCEAN BASE: RE PARA 12 REFTEL, WHILE WE SHARE YOUR DISLIKE OF RATSIRAKA'S CONTENTION THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE NO BASES IN SOMALIA, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE CHANCE OF SETTING RATSIRAKA STRAIGHT ON THIS
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PARTICULAR ISSUE IS GREAT ENOUGH TO WARRANT RELEASING ADDITIONAL BERBERA PHOTOGRAPHS TO GDRM AT THIS TIME. KISSINGER

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